



Water Conservation

San Diego County Freeways

FACT SHEET

GOALS

Manage water usage responsibly and efficiently;

Use recycled water when possible;

Create sustainable landscapes on highway roadsides and

Exceed state and local conservation conformity measures.



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SAVING WATER A TOP PRIORITY

- Caltrans is one of the largest water users in San Diego County and is stepping up its game when it comes to water conservation while maintaining landscaping and during highway construction projects.
- Caltrans has acted decisively to curtail water use to meet and exceed Governor Brown's 20 percent reduction mandate by setting a goal of a 50 percent reduction in water use.
- Caltrans is working on agreements with local water districts to ensure water availability and to meet any applicable water use restrictions and policies.

WHAT WE'RE DOING

- Upgrading nearly 90 percent of irrigation controllers (450 plus) to be operated through a computer-based Central Control System that includes water-saving features like High Flow Detection to identify irrigation breaks and automatically turn off the water flow.
- Collection of daily Evapotranspiration (ET) data to measure how much moisture is lost from a plant based on current weather conditions and to determine precise watering times and amounts to maintain plants.
- Automatic shut-down of the watering schedule during rainy weather. Note: Irrigation controllers not on Central Control still need to be manually shut off by maintenance crews or contractors.
- Working with construction contractors to improve watering practices through:
 - Prompt repair of irrigation breaks.
 - Watering between 6 p.m.-6 a.m., except during plant establishment and irrigation installation and repairs.

2014 WATER RESTRICTION EFFORTS

- Ceased all irrigation of turf grasses and lawns at Safety Roadside Rest Areas, Maintenance Stations, and Truck Inspection Facilities.
- Reduced irrigation frequencies.
- Programmed irrigation controller schedules for nighttime irrigation.
- Placed nearly 25,000 cubic yards of mulch to reduce water loss due to evaporation.
- Ceased on-site washing of Caltrans vehicles, except where it would present a potential health and safety issue to the driver or the traveling public.

- Maximized use of recycled water where available and feasible.
- Closely monitor water usage, and to spot, stop, and repair leaks or breaks.
- Improved response times to notifications and alerts of water leaks, errant sprinklers, and water breaks.
- Replaced and/or upgraded 30 irrigation controllers to “smart” technology.
- Replaced more than 10,000 inefficient sprinkler heads and ineffective automatic remote control valves to improve efficiencies and water savings.
- Replaced more than 78 urinals and toilets with low water-flow systems and 73 faucets with water-efficient faucets at all maintenance stations.

RECYCLED WATER

Caltrans is one of the largest users of recycled water in San Diego County and is aggressive in converting irrigated landscape areas from potable to recycled water where it is available. Caltrans efforts include:

- Installing water lines to bring recycled water to large segments of Interstate 5 (I-5) north coast, Interstate 15 from Escondido to Friars Road in San Diego, most of State Route 52 and the eastern portion of State Route 56.
- Caltrans also plans expanding recycled water use in the southern part of the district as projects develop on I-5, I-805 and SR-905.

USING RESOURCES WISELY

Caltrans is responsible for maintaining nearly 4,000 landscaped acres throughout the San Diego region. Landscaping not only provides a scenic backdrop for motorists, but it also serves as a fire break, helps prevent erosion in rural areas, and provides a buffer for errant vehicles, as well as privacy for residents along roadsides. As a good steward of taxpayer dollars, Caltrans has a responsibility to use water efficiently while maintaining a balance of what is considered functional and visually appealing. Efforts include:

- Using both native and drought-tolerant plants to reduce water usage and maintenance in varying climates. Native plants also help prevent soil erosion and require less fertilizer and chemical pesticides, protecting the groundwater supply.
- Installing non-living roadside solutions such as mulch or rockscapes.
- Setting a goal that 75 percent of new projects will require no supplemental water once installed and established.

CLEANING UP

Caltrans personnel carefully review each project for compliance with storm water regulations concerning materials storage, waste disposal, and equipment fueling and maintenance.

Construction inspectors also ensure that water usage is kept to a minimum and immediately repair any visible water leaks.

PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

Caltrans instituted its statewide Don't Trash California storm water and litter campaign in 2002, and locally is a major sponsor of San Diego's Think Blue campaign. We encourage motorists to report pollution of storm drains by calling (619) 235-1000 in the city of San Diego or 1-888-THINKBLUE (1-888-846-0800) in the greater San Diego Region.

Despite all the technology, there will likely be times when the system doesn't function properly. Motorists are encouraged to report broken sprinklers or other system failures along our highways to the Caltrans Public Information Office at (619) 688-6670.